

of his own last administration. Among the properties destroyed had been the Library of Congress, a valuable and extensive collection of volumes. Jefferson lost no time in offering his own library to Congress at its own price. It was a magnificent collection, consisting of between nine and ten thousand volumes. Jefferson wrote to Samuel H. Smith, who had been a member of his Cabinet and was now a representative from Maryland, and asked him to lay his proposition before Congress. "You know my collection, its condition and extent. I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense to make it what it is. \* \* \* It is long <sup>1</sup> since I have been sensible it ought not to continue private property, and had provided that at my death Congress should have the refusal of it at their own price. But the loss they have now incurred makes the present the proper moment for their accommodation, without regard to the small remnant of time and the barren use of my enjoying it. \* \* \* Congress may enter into immediate use of it, as eighteen or twenty wagons would place it in Washington in a single trip of a fortnight. I should be willing, indeed, to retain a few of the books to amuse the time I have yet to pass, which might be valued with the rest, but not included in the sum of valuation until they should be restored at my death, which I would carefully provide for, so that the whole library as it stands in the catalogue at this moment should be theirs without any garbling." The matter provoked an unpleasant debate in the House. It stirred up the old dislike for Jefferson on the part of some members, and intimations were not wanting that Jefferson had a personal advantage to serve. A bill was, however, carried through by an overwhelming vote, thanking Jefferson for his offer, and paying him the sum of \$23,950. This was far below the original cost, and the assaults upon Jefferson were unworthy of their authors. The year 1815 was spent by Jefferson in the usual routine of his domestic pursuits. During the early part of it he was constantly employed upon the cataloguing and shipment of the library. He himself sums up the uniform tenor of his life at this period. "I retain good health, am rather too weak to walk